

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-8, 16, 19 and 20 are presently pending. Applicants appreciate the indication in the office action mailed September 17, 2003, (Paper No. 20) that claims 1-8 are allowed, and that claim 17 would be allowable if amended to include all of the limitations of the base claim and
5 any intervening claims. Claim 16 has been non-substantively amended to include the limitation of claim 17, thus placing it in condition for allowance. Claims 19 and 20 are allowable at least for the reasons that they each depend from an allowable base claim and add limitations not present in the prior art. Claims 9-15, 17, and 18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. All pending claims are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

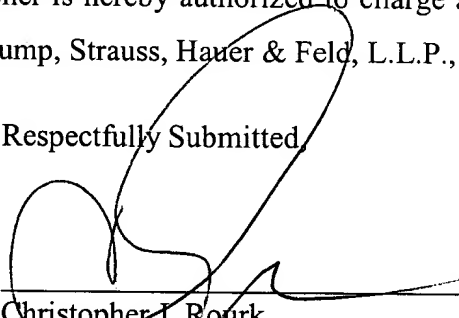
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks and for various other reasons readily apparent, Applicants submit that all of the claims now present are allowable, and withdrawal of the rejections and a Notice of Allowance are courteously solicited.

- 5 If any impediment to the allowance of the claims remains after consideration of this amendment, a telephone interview with the undersigned at (214) 969-4669 is hereby requested so that such impediments may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

- 10 No additional fee is believed to be required with this response. If any applicable fee or refund has been overlooked, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee or credit any refund to the deposit account of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, L.L.P., No. 01-0657.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Date: December 17, 2003
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